**10 Things to consider when getting seniors online - Bytes Feb 2016 - with suggestions and ideas**

HA = A handout is available to help you explain this. See last page for links to obtain them.

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|  | **The Problem** | **Suggestions and Ideas for Tutors. Use and explain** |
| 1 | **Wrong side of digital divide**  Many older Australians are missing out on the advantages of the Web due to uncertainty and fear about their security online. | * Nothing has changed. Internet and email are just another delivery system for scammers * Most scams come via phone calls and social engineering. Explain how some work so they can be on guard. * The media reports the NEWS. 10,000 cars travelling safely along a road is NOT news. One having a crash is. Encourage them to view shock jocks and sensationalist TV programs in that light, and with a grain of salt. * If it’s too good to be true it probably is. * Loneliness and seeking company are ‘emotional hooks’ for scammers. Seniors need to be aware and alert, not alarmed and fearful. * Stress the need to read the ‘Little Black Book of Scams’. These are available freely delivered in up to 100 copies (HA) * Up to date antivirus program and computer are important. But common sense still essential. You can have the safest car with the most air bags but nothing will protect against stupid driving practices. ‘Cruising the net’ is no different. |
| 2 | **Physical barriers**  Older people may experience changes in perception and motor skills. It may be hard for them to see a computer screen, type on a keyboard or use a mouse. | * Be observant of problems the senior may have. Vision, hand movements, hearing, memory, understanding. Some will tell you, others will hide their problems. * Ensure their seating and posture is suitable. Adjust the chair, desk, keyboard slope if required and explain how it is done. * Stress the importance of minimising strain on their body by taking regular breaks. A good reference is at [www.wikihow.com/Sit-at-a-Computer](http://www.wikihow.com/Sit-at-a-Computer) * Ergonomic computer chairs are great, however they do roll very easy. For some seniors it is all too easy for the chair to slip out from under them as they sit down. You may need to lower the chair, advise them to hang onto the chair as they ease on to it. * If necessary, adjust mouse speed, double click speed settings, cursor size etc * If they are happy with a touchpad then don’t force a mouse on them, and vice versa. Simply demo/explain the differences. * Observe the glasses they wear. Bifocals cause a sore neck and are often too powerful. * Reading glasses are usually a fraction too powerful for computer work. Suggest they try an older, weaker pair of reading glasses. Or get a cheap disposable pair that show their hand in focus when at arms length. Optometrists I’ve spoken to are quite happy with these glasses. The risk is that seniors will put off getting regular eye tests. * Stress regular eye examinations are free and important. They are NOT obliged to buy glasses after the tests. |
| 3 | **Language is foreign**  The language of technology is strange to the uninitiated particularly when there is no context, e.g. ‘upload’, ‘cookies’, ‘Web browser’, ‘URL’ | * Find out what sort of career they worked at, or hobbies and interests they have. These are valuable hooks for explaining things. * If at all possible relate new terms to what they know. Eg the web as a library, google as a librarian (HA). * Relate the email system to the postal system they know. Mail servers = post offices; email address is a ‘post office box’ at that mail server. * Have a glossary of terms or a FAQ sheet to give them. |
| 4 | **Constant updates**  Technology changes all the time. Some older people may question the value of learning something that is constantly evolving and changing | * Like learning to drive a car, once you learn one then the next one is easy. * A car gives great freedom to travel, but only if you go through the pain of learning to drive it. * All learning takes effort. NOBODY can learn for anyone else. * Change is a fact of everyday life. Ask them about changes they have experienced in their life and how the coped and mastered them? Having a go, mistakes and practice are common themes. |
| 5 | **Asking for help**  When learning something new, most people experience a fear of looking silly or of being a nuisance. This may be particularly so when the tutor is younger | * Questions are the tutors greatest friend. They are valuable ‘hooks’ to explain something that has the seniors interest. If you are a tutor who dreads questions then it’s time for you to change. * Be careful to understand the question. Newbies will often struggle to explain as they often don’t know the terms. Seek confirmation if necessary. Males in particular are often not good listeners and give the right answer to the wrong question. * IMHO the only dumb questions is the one that doesn’t get asked! * If you don’t know the answer - say so. Never BS. Then work at obtaining the answer, which doesn’t have to be right now. * Answer clearly whilst looking at them. Many are hard of hearing and rely on facial expressions. You also get feedback. * Assure them that they will not make mistakes; they will create ‘learning opportunities’. Mistakes are only when a user keeps repeating the same action and expects a different outcome. |
| 6 | **Goals change over time**  Younger people are willing to seek out skills that may be relevant later in life. Seniors are more interested in what matters to them now. | * Find out what THEY want to learn. What information or skill is their immediate needs. As soon as possible address some of those needs. * Progress to the senior is important. * Show them simple things that might ‘hook’ them - eg public transport; google street view of their house; how to search the internet for something that is a hobby or interest of theirs; the local weather radar; the news. * Trove can be a fascinating source of family and local history especially the digitised newspapers - [www.trove.nla.gov.au](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au) (Many have been “hooked” this way) |
| 7 | **What’s the point?**  If it takes an older person twice as long to learn something new, they may question why it’s important for them to make the investment. | * Ask what their hobbies and interests are. * Demonstrate the benefits that relate to their interests and needs. eg travel - how to find and book a place; growing roses - how to get info; medical issues - how to get info. Skype to contact grandkids. * **Q.** How did they get proficient in the hobbies or skills they have accumulated in their life? eg music, golf, bowls, painting, cooking, knitting, woodwork, gardening -  **A.** PRACTICE and learning from ‘mistakes’. * Reassure them they will not learn it in a blinding flash. The key is the letter P. It will take Patience, Perseverance, Practice and sometimes Profanity. |
| 8 | **Open source and trust**  Some older people are less trusting of open source or free software. They may questions its authenticity or whether it is secure | * Encourage them to research the intended software and safe sites where they might get it from * A good safe site for software reviews and download links is Gizmos’ at [www.techsupportalert.com](http://www.techsupportalert.com) * ALWAYS check EVERY setting on the installation screens AND when the software runs. Avoid extras and trials. * If in doubt, ask a geek! |
| 9 | **Affordability**  For some older people, the ongoing expenses associated with the use of technology, including the Internet, is out of their reach | * Establish needs. Their current phone and internet and typical monthly bills? What sort of calls do they make? What is their budget? Their location? Foxtel? Payment methods? * Explain ADSL, NBN, 3G/4G Wireless and WiFi systems. Wireless and WiFi often confuse newbies. (HA) * Explain how a smartphone can be used as an access point, however they must monitor usage and know their plan costs if excess usage. * Explain free sources of WiFi. Your BFS kiosk, clubs, some Maccas, Bunnings, OfficeWorks etc. Possibility of sharing with a neighbour? |
| 10 | **Access**  Access to technology is tricky. Some seniors may be socially isolated and unsure where to go for help | * Promote the BFS kiosk and ASCCA clubs * Mention the BFS Google Group. * Create logins for them for [www.bfseniorsonline.com.au](http://www.bfseniorsonline.com.au) Get them started on some modules (HA) * Demo [www.gcflearnfree.org](http://www.gcflearnfree.org) (HA) * Demo Googling for help * Do NOT use unsolicited offers of help. Hang up. * Get them to tell their children that they are using their computer to write their will. Instant help. * Explain Teamviewer and how trusted people and relatives can help them. It’s free. |

**General comments to help tutors.**

* These people have made the first huge step to try to learn by coming to class. Don’t crush them.
* It will take them awhile to pickup terminology and technique. Be patient. Don’t rush it.
* Try to get in some early wins ASAP. Even if it’s only being able to play solitaire.
* They may be grey on top and slow of movement but they have a lifetime of experience. Tap into it.
* They didn’t get old by being rash and stupid. Expect many to be very cautious. Reassure them.
* Most seniors have a great sense of humour. Enjoy a relaxing laugh with them.
* It will take time. Remind them how long it took to develop skills they do have.
* Not all have, or can afford, great globs of internet. Respect their constraints. Help them manage.
* The laptop or tablet they have might be all they can afford or justify. Don’t rubbish it.
* Don’t be hurt if they prefer another tutor. Tutor - senior relationships are important.
* “When you are in a hole - stop digging”. If you’re struggling to get across some info then try another approach - make a drawing, use a rhetorical question, consider making a hangout video

**Downloads for handouts and links mentioned above:**

* Little Black Book of Scams: [www.accc.gov.au/publications/the-little-black-book-of-scams](http://www.accc.gov.au/publications/the-little-black-book-of-scams)
* BFS free online training system [www.bfseniorsonline.com.au](http://www.bfseniorsonline.com.au)
* Goodwill Community Foundation (GCF) free tutorials [www.gcflearnfree.org](http://www.gcflearnfree.org)

The handouts below can be downloaded from <http://bfsv.wikispaces.com/Bfs+Resources> There are a lot of handouts at that site. To find these ones below just do a Find on the page for ‘xx’ (Ctrl + F)

* BFS free online training system 2 page handout
* GCF free online training system 2 page handout
* Library to Internet terminology comparison
* Wireless and WiFi connection handout